

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application in light of the above amendments and following comments is courteously solicited.

Claim 13 has been cancelled thereby rendering the examiner's rejection of same under 35 U.S.C. 112 moot.

Previously submitted claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Landolt et al., U.S. Patent 4,138,539. As to how this rejection applies to amended claim 22, it is respectfully traversed.

The examiner's attention is drawn to the paragraph bridging Pages 13 and 14 of the instant specification. As is set forth therein the new inventive drying method of the present invention is superior to the prior art continuous belt convective dryer. The dryer of the present invention is not based on a continuous moving belt; rather, the dryer of the present invention comprises a continuously moving bed of the polymer gel. The advantages of the drying method of the present invention are set forth in the instant specification starting on Page 12 line 16 through Page 15.

The prior art cited and applied by the examiner, namely, U.S. Patent 4,138,539 to Landolt et al. employs a process in a dryer which is known in the prior art. The process employs a continuous moving conveyor belt 22 for conveying particles through the dryer 21. This is contrary to the method of the present invention which comprises a moving bed of the polymer gel particles. Again the examiner attention is drawn to the paragraph bridging Pages 13 and 14 of the instant disclosure. Claim 22 has been amended so as to set forth with more specificity the nature of the dryer of the present invention, that is, a moving bed of polymer gel. The method of the present invention cannot be said to be taught or rendered obvious by the moving belt teaching of the '539 document. Accordingly, it is

respectfully submitted that claim 2 and the claims which depend therefrom clearly define over the cited and applied prior art references.

The examiner's attention is drawn to the dependent claims. Dependent claim 2 sets forth details of the dryer which is not at all shown or disclosed in the prior art. Claim 18 sets forth the differences in vacuum between the polymerization reactor and the closed dryer. Claim 19 further specifies the relative temperatures of the polymerization reactor and the closed dryer.

In light of the foregoing, it is submitted that all of the claims as pending patentably define over the art of record and an early indication of same is respectfully requested.

An earnest and thorough attempt has been made by the undersigned to resolve the outstanding issues in this case and place same in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or feels that a telephone or personal interview would be helpful in resolving any outstanding issues which remain in this application after consideration of this amendment, the Examiner is courteously invited to telephone the undersigned and the same would be gratefully appreciated.

It is submitted that the claims as amended herein patentably define over the art relied on by the Examiner and early allowance of same is courteously solicited.

If any fees are required in connection with this case, it is respectfully requested that they be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-0184.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sahbi Belkhiria et al.

By \_\_\_\_\_

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